

QUARTERLY STATUS REPORT

DATE: April 18, 2005

STREAMLINING

PROJECT: Evaluation of Wildlife Crossing Structures on US Highway 93 Evaro to Polson—Phase 1: Pre-construction data collection and finalization of evaluation

START DATE: March 1, 2002

EXPECTED

COMPLETION DATE: June 30, 2006

FUNDING LEVEL: \$562,500 (including 20% match from Montana Department of Transportation)

ANTICIPATED

PRODUCTS:

- Memo to Technical Design Committee on monitoring design considerations (completed May 2002)
- Animal-vehicle collision database (60% complete)
- Field Methods and Safety Protocol Handbook (draft 100% complete; submitted to MDT April 4, 2005)
- Summary of literature and existing data (60% complete; on-going)
- Memo defining the Measures of Effectiveness (75% complete)
- Long-term Research and Monitoring Evaluation Plan (60% complete)
- Phase 1 Pre-construction Case Study (30% complete)
- Pre-construction field data summary report (40% complete)

MEASURABLE

RESULTS:

(i.e. how did the project advance environmental streamlining)

PLEASE PROVIDE THE STATUS OF ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTS (E.G., PROJECT MILESTONES, DELIVERABLES, PRODUCT DISSEMINATION, RELEVANT DIVISION ACTIVITIES) FOR THE PROJECT IN THE APPROPRIATE SPACE(S) BELOW.

FOURTH REPORTING PERIOD (1/1/05-3/31/05)

Division Contact: Bob Seliskar

Funding Spent-to-Date: \$502,476.13

Funding Balance Remaining: \$60,023.97

On-going Activities

- Literature search and compilation of relevant data.
- Mentoring Whisper Maillet, WTI Graduate Fellow supported in cooperation with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with her thesis field research on US 93 deer crossings and deer-vehicle mortalities prior to the installation of mitigation measures.

January 2005

- University of Montana master's candidate, Karin McCoy, successfully defended her research thesis on pre-construction black bear movements and genetics relative to US 93. McCoy was incorporating revisions and planned to deliver her final thesis to WTI in April 2005. WTI will send the final thesis on to MDT, and will summarize her findings in a chapter in the pre-construction project's final synthesis report. McCoy plans to submit several papers from this thesis to peer-reviewed journals. WTI will work with McCoy to ensure her methods and approaches are well-documented in order to repeat this project a few years after wildlife mitigation has been installed.

February 2005

- Assessed the track bed conditions for spring maintenance in preparation for the summer tracking season. Contacted Lake County Weed Control and Montana Conservation Corps to tentatively schedule their services to control weeds and help with the labor to grub and rake the beds.

March 2005

- Drafted memo regarding the scope, budget, and the final pre-construction season of field work.
- Finished drafting the pre-construction methods handbook.
- Submitted two project-related abstracts to the International Conference on Ecology and Transportation (ICOET) for presentation in August 2005*: 1) on the tracking methods; and 2) on Measures of Effectiveness (the latter submission is co-authored with MDT Missoula District Biologist Pat Basting). *Travel funds to ICOET will not come from this project, but rather from WTI's travel budget.

Summary

Bear study thesis has been drafted and successfully defended; final thesis is expected to be delivered by April 2005. Deer study is in process of analyses and drafting of thesis; we expect a draft thesis to be delivered by August 2005. Road-kill data collection, tracking bed data collection protocols are all in place as are databases and quality assurance/quality control systems. All protocols are documented in the Field Methods Handbook; a draft of the Handbook was completed and sent to MDT for their review in early April. Measures of Effectiveness are overdue, but we expect to deliver these products in draft form to MDT for review by June. WTI submitted a memo to MDT regarding how changes in construction schedules and special requests for tasks beyond the original scope have affected the remainder of the pre-construction monitoring budget. We await a reply to our concerns as it affects whether we collect a third season of tracking data.